

NATIONAL IMMIGRATION FORUM

PRESS RELEASE



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NOW MORE THAN EVER!

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WANT COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

Washington, DC – Interest in passing comprehensive immigration reform among all voters has increased since last year, and voters are poised to reward lawmakers who support such reforms. These are among the findings of a new nationwide poll conducted by Democratic polling firm Lake Research Partners and Republican polling firm The Tarrance Group on behalf of the National Immigration Forum and the Manhattan Institute, released today in Washington.

“There is a dramatic surge in interest in Congress resolving the immigration issue this year across all categories of voters,” said Frank Sharry, Executive Director of the National Immigration Forum. “Voters are clearly laying this issue at the feet of Congress and will not accept gridlock or partisan bickering. Doing nothing is not an option.”

75% support comprehensive immigration reform

Fully three-quarters (75%) of American voters support a comprehensive immigration reform proposal that contains the following elements:

- Greatly enhanced border security;
- Much tougher penalties on employers who hire illegally;
- Allowing more foreign workers to come legally to work on a temporary basis;
- Creating a system in which currently undocumented workers can come forward and register with the government, pay a fine, and receive temporary legal work status;
- Allowing temporary workers a multi-step, multi-year process to earn citizenship if they get to the end of the line and satisfy certain criteria such as remaining crime free, learning English, and paying taxes.

The poll found just 17% opposed to such a plan. That compares to 71% support and 23% opposition when this same plan was presented to voters in a July 2006 poll by the same pollsters.

This level of support is observed across all categories of voters: white (75%), African-American (70%), Hispanic (74%), strong Republican (76%), strong Democrat (74%), voters in swing

congressional districts (72%), very conservative (75%), liberal (75%), white conservative Christians (78%), born again Christians (78%), voters who attend church weekly (76%), seniors (73%), and daily listeners of talk-radio (76%), for example.

Voters want action

“This is an issue in which voters are clearly out in front of their elected leaders,” Sharry said. “Many members of Congress worry about the ‘A’ word or being challenged in a primary by some hothead spewing sound bites. When are they going to get that the American people are sending a loud and clear message to fix it, do it now, and get it right? It seems that some in Congress are hoping this issue will just go away. But it isn’t going away until elected policy makers in both parties respond to the public demand for a solution.”

The pollsters over-sampled voters in key congressional districts, including the 60 districts that voted for Bush in 2004 but voted for a Democrat in 2006, which many see as the key battlegrounds that will determine the contest for Congress in 2008. The support for the proposal was consistently high and desire for action by Congress consistently intense. Voters in two congressional districts where immigration was a central campaign issue and which were won by freshmen Representatives in 2006, Illinois-06 and Arizona-05, showed solid and similar support for the proposal.

In head to head, comprehensive reform trounces “attrition”

Voters were given a choice between comprehensive reform with a path to citizenship and what opponents of comprehensive reform call “attrition.” Here’s how it was described in the poll:

“Some people say that we don’t need to offer illegal immigrants a path to citizenship, that’s amnesty & rewarding them for breaking our laws. By enforcing the law more strictly, it will become so hard to live & work here that they will go back where they came from.”

Only 26% choose this option. A robust 65% support comprehensive immigration reform with a path to citizenship.

“The opponents of immigration reform are pitching what they call ‘attrition’ but the voters aren’t buying it,” Sharry said. “People want change, not more of the same. Voters want substantive solutions, not simplistic slogans.”

- *The Power-Point presentation of the poll findings is [here](#).*
- *A summary of recent polls on immigration by the media and others is [here](#).*
- *The Forum’s public opinion web page is [here](#).*
- *An MP3 audio recording of a tele-press conference held Wednesday, April 25, 2007 at 2:00 p.m. will be posted on the [Forum’s website](#) within 24 hours. Participating were Frank Sharry, Tamar Jacoby (Manhattan Institute), David Mermin (Lake Research Partners), and Brian Nienaber (The Tarrance Group).*

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